

**JOHNSON CITY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
March 8, 2016**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Joe Wise, Chairman
Timothy Zajonc, Vice-Chairman
Brenda Clarke, Assistant Secretary
Jenny Brock
Jacobus Louw
Bob Cooper
Uwe Rothe
Jamie Povlich
Thomas Henning

MEMBERS ABSENT: Greg Cox, Secretary

STAFF PRESENT: Angie Carrier, Development Services Director
Steve Neilson, Development Coordinator
Angie Charles, Senior Planner
Matt Young, Planner I
Laura Edmonds, Administrative Coordinator
Allan Cantrell, City Engineer
Jim Epps, City Legal Counsel

Chairman Wise called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Commissioner Zajonc gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes of the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting on February 9, 2016, were approved by a 9-0 vote.

The first order of business was the Approval of the Agenda. The agenda was amended by removing the Consideration of Contraction of the corporate limits for portions of the Suncrest Annexation Area and instead adding a discussion to develop criteria for future deannexation. The amended agenda was approved by a 9-0 vote.

The first item on the agenda was to consider an amendment to Article VII of the Zoning Code regarding signage in the B-2 and B-3 Zoning Districts. At the June Planning Commission meeting, the Planning Commission created a Taskforce to review the B-2, Central Business District and the B-3, Supporting Central Business District Sign Regulations. This item went before the HZC at its December 17th meeting where the HZC was in support of the proposed changes with the exception of Section 7.1.3.7.G, Mural Application Permit. On February 22nd, 2016, the HZC voted to prohibit murals in the Downtown Historic District. Staff then amended the proposed ordinance to remove the provision regarding murals in the Historic District.

Public Hearing was held.

Amber Lee, 723 W. Pine Street, is in attendance to represent downtown business owners Yancy Grimmett with Downtown Farming and Dick Nelson with Nelson Fine Arts. Mrs. Lee spoke in favor of the request and would like to revisit the sign ordinance in hopes of adding allowance of a twenty percent wall area sign that is currently in place in the City of Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Patricia McNamara, came to express Code Enforcement issues. Chairman Wise informed Ms. McNamara that this Planning Commission Meeting is not an appropriate location to express to these types of concerns, but instead to contact Development Services Director, Angie Carrier, during regular business hours.

Public Hearing was closed.

Motion: Zajonc

Second: Povlich

Recommend approval of an amendment to Article VII of the Zoning Code regarding signage in the B-2 and B-3 Zoning Districts.

The motion passed by a 6-3 (Rothe, Brock, Wise) vote.

Recommend approval for staff to investigate Chattanooga's Sign Regulations, allowing larger wall signs on walls not abutting a public street.

The motion passed by a 9-0 vote.

The second item on the agenda was to consider Amendments to Article II, Definition of terms, and Article IV, Application of Regulations to allow the keeping of honeybees within all districts. Staff met with representatives from ETSU and State Apiarist (bee scientist) Michael Struder with regards to allowing the keeping of honeybees within the City as an accessory use. Mr. Struder along with the group from ETSU gave a presentation to the Planning Commission at the February 9, 2016 Johnson City Regional Planning Commission meeting. They have asked that the Planning Commission strongly consider amending the Zoning Code to allow the keeping of honeybees in all districts.

Public Hearing was held.

James Wagner, a resident of Sullivan County, and a member of Washington County Bee Keepers Club, spoke in favor of the allowing of honeybees in City limits. Mr. Wagner stated that the Honeybees currently reside within City limits and that he has had several calls to assist in the removal of Honeybees within corporate City limits.

Audra Schuppan, 1800 E. Millard Street, spoke in favor of the allowing of Honeybees in City limits. Mrs. Schuppan mentioned that there are bee classes being held to teach and educate those

interested in beekeeping. Mrs. Schuppan mentioned that putting together stipulations for beekeeping could be beneficial, such as receiving approval from neighbors along with requiring certification and proper management of Honeybees. She also stated that the allowing of Honeybees in City limits would be a great asset to Johnson City.

Laura Eryasa, 1186 Riverview Drive, spoke in favor of the request as a present beekeeper and store owner retailing bee supplies. Mrs. Eryasa stated that in Johnson City, we have great access to a school educating Beekeeping, and that she encourages everyone to get engaged in the keeping of Honeybees and wildflowers necessary for pollination of our local fruits and vegetables.

Calvin Robinson, 910 Lincoln Drive, spoke in favor of the allowing of Honeybees in City limits. Mr. Robinson stated that the biggest concern in the allowing of Honeybees is the fear of bees. He mentioned that Honeybees are a gentle creature and the likelihood of getting stung is generally low. Mr. Robinson stated that he had issues with the wording in the Definition of terms by specifically pointing out that Honeybees are not associated with the term “farm animal.”

Brad Parker, 1092 Johnson City, spoke in favor of the allowing of Honeybees in City limits. Mr. Parker stated that he has a significant amount of experience in beekeeping and wanted to make himself available for any questions the Commission might have.

Edward Skinner, Johnson City resident, spoke in favor of the allowing of Honeybees in City limits. Mr. Skinner stated that this is a great opportunity to educate the people and youth of Johnson City of the benefits of Honeybees and truly how gentle these creatures are.

Darrell Moore, 2400 Camelot Circle, spoke in favor of the allowing of Honeybees in City limits by emphasizing the gentleness of the Honeybees. Mr. Moore also mentioned that bees fly up and over yards and simply aren't interested in stinging anyone, but instead they are programmed to gather food. The only time a Honeybee might be aggressive is when they are defending their hive.

Chase Goodman, 101 W. Chesnut, spoke in favor of the allowing of Honeybees in City limits by stating that he is a current Beekeeper in Virginia and looks forward to bringing his hives to Johnson City one day. Mr. Goodman also mentioned that his Honeybees were kept in a busy neighborhood with lots of children nearby, and with good management skills and practices has never had any issues.

Amy Garland, resident of Elizabethton, spoke in favor of the allowing of Honeybees in City limits by stating that pesticides within our food are far worse than Honeybees. Ms. Garland mentioned that Honeybees are instrumental for the growing of our local fruits and vegetables.

Will White, 816 W. Locust, spoke in favor of the allowing of Honeybees in City limits by stating that he has a high interest in Beekeeping and thinks that this would be beneficial in promoting others to get involved as well.

Shae Keene, 1107 Claiborne Street, spoke in favor of the allowing of Honeybees in City limits by agreeing with former speakers but also adding that there is just as high a need for urban beekeeping as there is for agricultural beekeeping. Ms. Keene mentioned that there are Pollinator Projects and grant funding for urban farming that assist in beekeeping within City limits. She

suggested that there be public education opportunities throughout Johnson City to educate and address allergies and the safety precautions necessary for proper management of beekeeping.

Justin Mitchell, 3305 Street Drive, spoke in favor of the allowing of Honeybees in City limits by stating that pollination is necessary for food, and locally grown fruits and vegetables are the healthiest type of food.

Public hearing was closed.

Motion: Rothe

Second: Cooper

**Recommend approval of
Amendments to Article II, Definition
of terms, and Article IV, Application
of Regulations to allow the keeping
of honeybees within all districts.**

The motion passed by a 9-0 vote.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

APPROVED:

SIGNED:

Joe Wise, Chairman

Greg Cox, Secretary